

AMERICAN PATRIOTISM.

Read at Pierian Literary Society by W. H. Miller.

The patriotism of ancient Greece is sung in song, and told in story.

The chronicler of all ages presents to us illustrious patriots and patriotic people or nations.

These nations may be found from the orient to the occident, yes from the land where the Aurora Borealis scatters his effulgence to that clime where summer reigns supreme.

A people whose patriots and patriotism is of the highest order, are the people of America.

The philosopher has declared that it is natural for man to have a sentiment of interest in the people to which he belongs, and a love for his country.

This sentiment nourished and guided by the spirit of love is that virtue which we designate as patriotism. True patriotism as distinguished from impulsive or sentimental patriotism may be said to seek our country's welfare, and the wishing of well-being to our citizens through benevolence.

At home it is not sectional but utilitarian. Abroad it is charitable to all nations.

This virtuous patriotism in its highest development and broadest achievement is found in the land of America.

It is true that this patriotism is the outgrowth of that English patriotism, whose foundation was laid at Runnymede where the Barons wrenched from King John the great Magna Charta. At the time when this English patriotism was at its zenith the American colonies were formed. They brought with them a spirit of liberty and patriotism which in the land of America developed wonderfully.

Edmond Burke remarked in 1775 in the House of Parliament that the temper and character of America must be considered in treating with the American colonies. Burke gives us six reasons for the intense love of liberty in America. May we not justly say that those same sources underlie American Patriotism?

The sources as given by Burke were 1st, Descent. 2nd, Forms of government. 3rd, The religious principles of the North. 4th, The social institutions of the South. 5th, The peculiarities of American education, and 6th, remote-

ness from Great Britain. These sources developing in the Americans more fully the spirit of liberty, were at the same time implanting in their hearts a love for their hearthstones and their institutions, and that love which prevails in the hearts of those who have a common interest at stake.

Here then we have developed a patriotism, not of the impulsive or sentimental kind, but that highest of all patriotisms, virtuous patriotism.

This patriotism is well described in a poem entitled the Revolutionary Rising.

We are shown a colonial church. The Sabbath with its sweet hour has come. The people are congregated for worship. The pastor with his snowy locks, and his brow of thought and care, leads the people into the house of prayer as the shepherd leads his flock.

"His prayer was strong,
The Psalm was warrior David's song,
He spoke of wrongs too long endured,
Of sacred rights to be secured.
The startling words for Freedom came,
And rising on his themes broad wing,
Hurl defiance to a tyrant King.

His sermon thrilled and roused the patriotism of his hearers. The pastor declares "that God's temples are our forts and towers, when God is with our righteous cause.

The enlisting trumpet was placed near the door, and its sounds swept through the church. The bell rang as never before. The patriot striding from his desk, this was his cry;—"who dares?"

Come out with me, in Freedom's name,
For her to live, for her to die?
A hundred hands flung up reply,
A hundred voices answered, "I."

This patriotism was exemplified in the Revolutionary war. All that was near and dear to the Americans was at stake. They left their tracks on frozen ground. They suffered for lack of food, clothing and medical attendance. They gave their lives on the battlefield, in prisons, and aboard prison ships. But with the resolve of a patriot they pressed on and won a victory. The war being over there was yet a great work to do. There were thirteen distinct colonies, each with its own wants. Many despaired of ultimate success.

But in this critical time American patriotism again came to the front, formed the constitution, and by its persevering energy saw its adoption, the Father of His country its chief

executive, and the thirteen colonies so many constituents of the most stable government on earth.

American patriotism rallied to the support of Washington and rendered service of inestimable value. Through Hamilton it placed our credit on a firm basis. Webster has said of Hamilton: "He struck the rock of national resources and abundance of revenue burst forth. He touched the dead corpse of public credit, and it sprang upon its feet." Words describing the outward act of an inward patriotic zeal.

American Patriotism in the war of 1812 caused the powers of Europe to respect our flag. For a long period following the war of 1812 the chief work of American Patriotism was to teach what true patriotism is.

The immensity of our country, the diversity of its occupations caused sectionalism.

Men began to lose the patriotic spirit and seek only their own and their section's welfare. American patriotism steps in and acts as the pacifier. It utters in the U. S. senate the memorable words, liberty and union, now and forever one, and inseparable.

It fills the hearts of the loyal North with the spirit of 1775.

And when treason in all its hideousness confronts our nation, it sends the news to Washington, we are coming Father Abraham 300,000 strong.

And the venomous Hydra of rebellion and treason is slain by the Hercules of American Patriotism. The result accomplished it places the rebelled states to their former lofty position.

I need not tell you how it furnished means and men for the successful putting down of the civil war, and its leniency toward the conquered.

You all know its conduct. The work of American patriotism of the present is to develop a purer patriotism. Yes, develop a patriotism that may be styled virtuous. When it shall have removed all sectional feeling, brought a feeling of good will toward all nations, quenched intense party spirit, and brought a respect for all rulers and officers it shall have reached its acme. Oh, that our patriotism were quickened to such an extent, that we could exclaim with Scott:—

"Breathes there a man with soul so dead," etc.